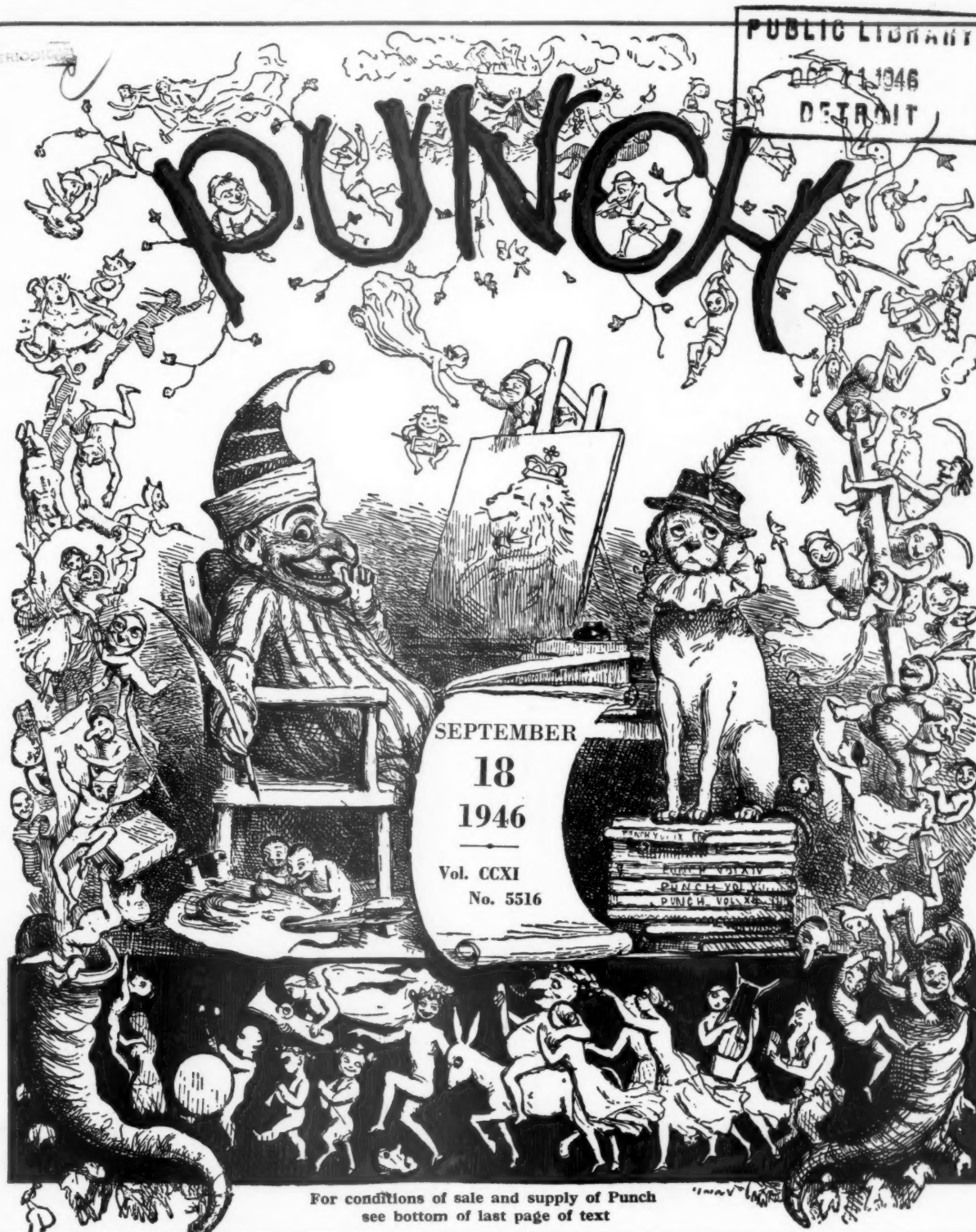


**DUNLOP** *Still* the standard by which all tyres are judged



For conditions of sale and supply of Punch  
see bottom of last page of text

Fit "**Triplex**"—and be safe  
Regd



Preparing  
to be a  
Beautiful  
Lady

Betty and the Bunny family are "at home" in the nursery, waiting to welcome young friends to tea. But, startling though it is, Mrs. Bunny's lavish toilette cannot compete with Betty's simple dotted muslin and the glow of her rosy complexion. All her life Betty will be a centre of attraction, for with Pears Soap and clear water, Mummy keeps her skin quite perfect — Preparing her to be a Beautiful Lady.

## PEARS SOAP

*We regret that Pears Transparent Soap is in short supply just now.*

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**More Ships  
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With the release of more railway steamships and the repair of damaged ports, passenger and freight services have been resumed with one country after another.

New and better ships are being built to replace those sunk by the enemy.



**THE RAILWAYS ARE GETTING BACK TO NORMAL**

WHAT EXPORTS MEAN TO US

**A big push on exports...**



**will bring the imports we need...**



To start the ball of prosperity rolling, we have to send British goods out of the country. Why is this? Simply because it is the only way we have of paying for supplies we must have from overseas. A big push on exports will not only bring in the food we need, but also the raw materials to keep our factories in full production, our workers in full employment and our shops in full supply. Exports are a national

priority just now, because they are vital to our recovery.

**FILL THE SHIPS  
and we shall  
FILL THE SHOPS**

*Issued by the Board of Trade*

### A GOOD TURN

To those to whom it is second nature to do a good turn, the Church Army appeals on behalf of men, women and children needing a new start in life. The task of turning sadness into gladness is indeed a happy one—will YOU take a turn? Please send a gift to The Rev. Prebendary Hubert H. Treacher, Church Army, 55, Bryanston St., London, W.1.

**Healthy dogs  
make good companions**



**BOB MARTIN'S**

Condition Powder Tablets

**keep dogs fit**



### Bottle up your feelings

However sick you are of restrictions, it's still better to bottle up your feelings than to unbottle your Lembar. Keep it till someone in the family is genuinely sick: Lembar is made from pure lemon juice, glucose, barley and sugar, and it does make 'flu, biliousness or fevers a bit easier to bear.

**RAYNER'S medicinal  
Lembar**

Available in limited  
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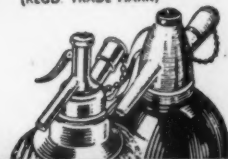


### OUT OF SODA AGAIN!

What a boon it will be when Sparklets Syphons and Bulbs are again obtainable.

There are prospects of better supplies in the near future and you will soon be able to make at home the purest, freshest "soda" that ever sparkled up a drink.

**Sparklets**  
(REGD. TRADE MARK)



**HYGIENIC—CONVENIENT—ECONOMICAL**





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Says the brilliant K.C.: "Here's the evidence clear. The case for quick shaving is all summed up here!"

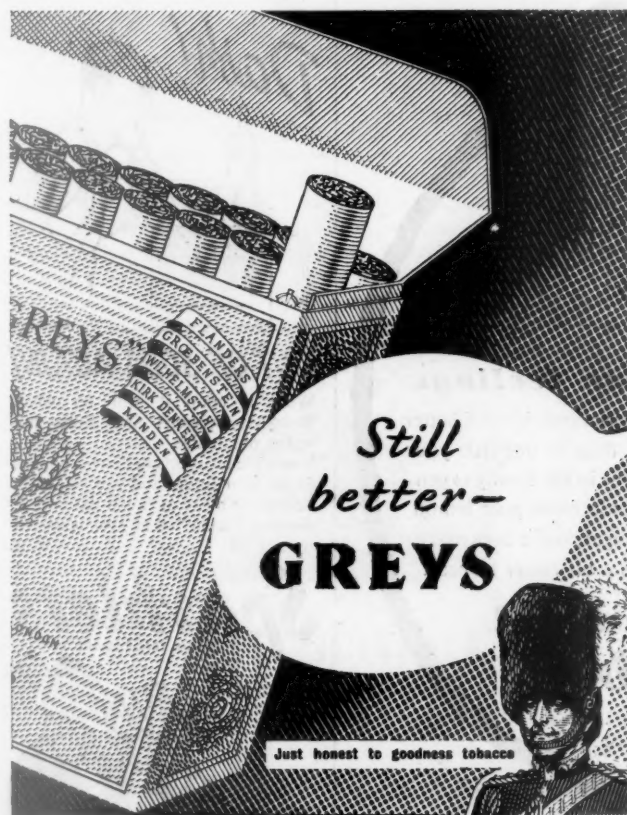
### THE BATHROOM SET

This new Gillette No. 26 set is designed specially for your bathroom shelf. The Gillette razor is bright nickel plated, with a telescopic handle, extending to full length when screwed together. There are two Blue Gillette Blades. All fit conveniently into a plastic container which combines razor stand with special compartment for used blades.



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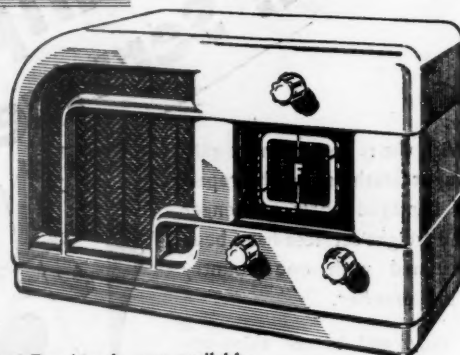
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Ferranti now offer model 546



THE FERRANTI 546 Receiver is now available, in limited quantities, from Appointed Ferranti Radio Dealers. Hear it—let it speak for itself. Hold it—notice that it is a true portable weighing only 10½ lbs. with self-contained aerial—and remember 'Ferranti' means reliability.

Transportable AC/DC Superhet. 2 wavebands. Off-white plastic cabinet.

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FERRANTI LTD., MOSTON, MANCHESTER 10; AND 36 KINGSWAY, LONDON, W.C.2

# "Tell me, doctor..."

... what are the important properties in an antiseptic for personal use?"

In the first place an antiseptic must kill germs. But, more than that, it must kill them without damaging the tissues they have invaded. An antiseptic for personal use must be non-toxic, stable and active in the presence of blood or other organic matter; and, for preference, it should be agreeable

in use. These are the properties of an antiseptic which medical science has anxiously sought since germs first came to be understood.

In the modern antiseptic 'Dettol' these qualities are united and combined; and to-day in our great hospitals and in private practice, doctors, surgeons and nurses use 'Dettol' to protect their patients, and themselves, from the menace of septic infection.

FROM ALL CHEMISTS





# PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCXI No. 5516

September 18 1946

## Charivaria

RACEGOERS at Doncaster are reported to have paid fabulous sums, for information, to a well-known tipster. They understood him to say, "I gotta house."

A Scots correspondent complains that the continual use of the word "England" in reference to the nation's activities is enough to drive a thinking person to drink. We agree with him: ours is a double British and soda.



### Add This to Your Gratuity.

"INTELLIGENT Girls Wanted as Tele-Printer Operators; ex-Service Women are also invited to apply."—*Advt. in Worcester Evening News and Times.*

Representatives of the tailoring trade are to take an active part in dressing British film actors. They will see that the cut is right, whether the director shouts it or not.

A legal writer says that if people were summoned for pavement obstruction there would be no queues. Except of course outside police courts.

"I have tried every honest means of raising money for my church," claims a clergyman. Now perhaps he might try a sale-of-work.

After laying a nine-ounce egg, an Ammanford hen went back to laying normal-sized ones. It was something to do with the union.

Certain great powers take a serious view of Britain's influence in the Balkans and suspect that we are adopting a policy of deliberately fomenting peace in Greece.

### Complacency Corner

"Experienced Church Musician with unimpeachable credentials, seeks a post where dignity and beauty (perhaps with simplicity) are appreciated."—*Advt. in local paper.*

A boarding-house keeper says that in these days of rationing guests must be prepared for anything. Or at least hardly anything.

"I usually notice the local sweep on his rounds first thing every morning," mentions a correspondent. His brushes of course distinguish him from the returning baker.



A man complained in court that his neighbour had struck him in the stomach with some kind of long-handled mallet. This is known as the polo punch.

### Never a Dull Moment

"Half-hunter lever 17-jewelled Gold Watch; Strikes hours, minutes, seconds; perfect condition."—*Advt. in "The Times."*

A ship's officer writing in an evening paper admits that he is always seasick on the first day of a voyage. We can only suggest that he should put off his departure till the second day.

As we go to press the Printing Trade dispute has not yet been settled, and in consequence our production is still curtailed. As soon as there is a settlement of the dispute larger-sized issues will be published to make compensation for what has been lost.

## For Optimists Only

THE weather is fairish,  
The worm's in the apple,  
The fly's on the carrot,  
The kale is uncured;  
St. Marylebone Parish  
Is building a chapel  
For me and Miss Barrett—  
All's right with the world!

EVOE.

## I've Got Nothing to Hide.

FROM time to time the newspapers carry stories, whether as straightforward reporting or in the form of letters to their editors, of decent God-fearing men who have been subjected to the grossest affront that can befall a free citizen of this country. This is of course to be asked to show an identity card.

A feature common to these stories is the extraordinary inconvenience to which a man will put himself rather than produce his card when called upon to do so. He may have toiled for days to attain some cherished objective, to reach the summit of Skiddaw, perhaps, or to buy a second-hand Air-Sea Rescue launch, but if at the very instant of success some scoundrel demands to see his identity card, he does not hesitate. He goes black in the face with rage and home. It is as if, in one of those Jack-and-the-Beanstalk games played with dice, he had received instructions when on the very verge of winning to GO BACK TO SQUARE FOUR AND MISS THREE TURNS.

Except that in this case he imposes the penalty on himself, rather than pull a piece of folded pasteboard out of his wallet.

Some time ago, it will be remembered, a gentleman walked into a post office with the respectable object of drawing some money out of his Savings Account. They asked for his card, so he walked out again without his money. Next day he was back again and the procedure was repeated; and so for many days until, the affair having been freely ventilated in press and pulpit, it was held that the gentleman's identity had been established and he was allowed to take his talent without exposing his card to public view. More recently, Mr. Beverley Nichols had a similarly hideous experience. He had for some time been wanting, as a man will, a small mahogany table. He found one, in a second-hand furniture shop. The price was reasonable. He bought it. And then, just as he was considering no doubt the most convenient way of humping it home, the second-hand furniture man coolly asked to see his identity card. Mr. Nichols did the only possible thing. He walked straight home, sat down—not, alas! at a mahogany table, but at the corner, one supposes, of some old packing case—and wrote to the *Daily Telegraph* about it.

What is so splendid, and at the same time so sad, about these manifestations of the English spirit at its best is that only the hero of them suffers. The furniture dealer will sell his mahogany table to somebody else. The post office continues its interrupted chat. Severally and collectively they couldn't care less. It is Mr. Nichols and

the man who wanted his money who are back in Square Four.

Anxious to find out what it is about an identity card that makes the owner so bitterly determined not to produce it, I have been having a look at mine. It is crumpled at the edges and my Christian name is, as always, wrongly spelt. I notice, too, that by pencilling somebody's telephone number on the back I have made myself liable to a fine or imprisonment or both. But I see nothing shameful or obscene about it. If it fell out of my pocket at a dinner-party I should pick it up and replace it without a blush. It would not occur to me to attempt to scuffle it under my chair or grind it into the carpet with my heel. Anybody who wants to see it may do so without charge, if he or she will make an appointment on any week-day after eleven in the morning. When a man has hauled out his Military Identity Card (A.B.2606, was it?) day after day for five years, with photograph, he is not likely to be shy about his name and address on a bit of blue cardboard.

I was asked for my card only this morning, as a matter of fact. Some little bit of business into which we need not enter; but before concluding the transaction the official with whom I was dealing asked, quite politely, to see my card.

"What the devil do you mean?" I said.

He explained that it was a regulation laid down by, shall we say the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries?

"I never heard such nonsense in my life," I said. "What's the idea of it, that's what I want to know?"

He said it was the regulation.

"Do you think I'm a deserter or an enemy alien or what?" I asked. "Because if so, let me be taken to the police station at once and searched by a properly qualified officer. Or why not line me up," I suggested, "with half a dozen other crooks and vagabonds and see whether the Minister of Agriculture can pick me out? For all you know I may be the unauthorized rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built."

I was anxious, you see, to help him in every possible way.

However, he said that all that was necessary was for me to show my identity card. The whole business, he promised, would be very quickly over and would be carried out in the strictest confidence. So I showed him my card without any fuss—an action which, I am glad to say, had the loudly-expressed approval of the seventeen people behind me in the queue.

The odd thing was that as I went out of the door the man who had taken my place at the counter was just starting the most tremendous hullabaloo about having to show his identity card—the fool!

H. F. E.

## Gone to Earth

(*The River Misbourne, in Bucks, having often dried up and reappeared, is now considered really extinct.*)

AS local rivers go, 'twas rather dim,  
Now drying up a bit, now gently oozing;  
The yellow primrose by the river's brim  
Would surely find its whimsies most confusing.

A tiny stream, meandering and forlorn,  
At last with this, its sad demise, it earns  
The modest title of the Missingbourne,  
That Bourne which to no traveller returns.



### ANOTHER PLACE

"What about trying to nip into our old Chamber before those squatters from the Commons get back?"



## Just One of Those Columns

### "FAR FROM" A LIBEL

THE new season of libel actions is unlikely to include one based on a libel as indirect as that for which the Humdrum Club sued the late Professor Clambake towards the close of the last century. In November 1882 the Professor wrote a letter to *The Times* in which, doubtless from force of habit, he used the phrase "I am far from any works of reference, but . . ." When this appeared in print with the address from which he wrote given as the Humdrum Club, the Club immediately sued him, on the ground that he had given publicity to the defamatory and damaging statement that its reference-library was inadequate. Elderly readers will recall that the result was what might have been expected from a case in which the great Vivvid Hughes, Q.C., appeared for one side and the great Reddin Toothunclaw, Q.C., for the other: the whole matter turned on the precise significance of the word "far," and when Professor Clambake's distance from the Club's library was proved to have been (at the time of writing) not less than forty-five feet, he was held to have won.

### TITLES TO FAME

One of the new recipients of peerages must have found his choice of a title simple enough; no cricketer with such a name as St. John S. Wood could have resisted the temptation to become "Lord Zzz." But there are sometimes equally powerful influences at work on the side of complete refusal. One of the great philanthropists of the Victorian age remained a "Mister" to the end of his life solely because of the associations of his name. He would have accepted a peerage, but the recognition offered him never went beyond a knighthood or a baronetcy; and he could not bear the prospect (as he admitted to a friend shortly before he died) of a daily post full of letters beginning "Dear Sir Orr Maddam."

### THE "SCREAMER"

Mr. Roy L. Prerogattiff, who has announced his intention of abolishing the hyphen, is likely to meet with as little success as Count Ten, the Continental nobleman who set out in the early nineteen-hundreds to abolish the exclamation-mark. The Count, however, had the stronger case. As he wrote to Ruskin in 1907: "The writer who puts a screamer after his joke is only too well justified in believing that it wouldn't be a joke without one." Ruskin, who had died in 1900, did not reply; but in his autobiography the Count revealed that he had often afterwards wondered what Ruskin would have replied, and expressed the view that there were other reasons for his silence.

### DESTINATION UNKNOWN

Not everyone will agree with Mr. Justice Archipelago's ruling that all proper names should be pronounced in all circumstances as nearly as possible as they are pronounced in the country of origin. It is an old controversy, which reached its height during the war apropos of the place-names in the broadcast news, but the soundest rule has always been to adjust one's pronunciation to one's audience. I had occasion recently (writes a correspondent) to travel on business connected with oil, and being in an abstracted frame of mind when I went to the travel agency in a Northern town I somewhat abruptly, and forgetting to Anglicize my pronunciation, asked for my ticket thus:

"Return—Bakir." I must admit that the man behind the counter had some excuse for irritation as he replied "Yes, but wheer do you want to go to?"

### A USEFUL DEVICE

The shortage of chalk, which is reported to be so serious in the Somerset town of Cowboys Nindians that schoolmasters there are writing on blackboards with aspirin-tablets, recalls to a correspondent (for some reason) the fact that a few years ago the Bishop of Ump revealed to the head-waiter of a famous London restaurant an infallible method of preventing the theft of any cutlery. "You will have noticed," the Bishop said, "that a spoon or fork or knife with a sticky handle is never pocketed by even the most acquisitive diner. A perfectly simple method of retaining all your cutlery is never to issue it without making every handle sticky." The advice was taken to heart, and since that day the restaurant concerned has never lost so much as a coffee-spoon. Custom is understood to have fallen off steadily, but you can't have everything.

### ANOTHER MOUTH TO FEED

Three-year-old Evacustes is beginning to take an interest in meteorological phenomena, but his questions are sometimes difficult for his five-year-old sister to answer. The other day the little girl said to her mother, "Mummy, Evacustes asked me why rain falls down instead of up." "And what did you tell him, Cleopatra?" Quick as a flash, Cleopatra replied, "Why, I told the little squirt to go and eat coke." Some minutes of explanation were needed to make it clear to her how precious coke is at the moment.

R. M.

## Autumn

LET my eyes be shut to the dahlias,  
and the first leaves down,  
to the bud that will not be a rose,  
to all things brown,

To the smoke rising from the bonfires  
into paler skies,  
where flocks of birds fly slowly southward,  
be closed my eyes!

Too swift the springs die; the summers pass  
like gay tunes half sung:  
surely the flowers bloomed for ever  
when I was young?

Surely the trees were green at Christmas?  
I cannot recall  
seeing the smoke rise from a bonfire  
or a leaf fall.

V. G.

"Venetian Palazzo. For Sale known as the Queen's House in course of restoration suitable for any retiring sixteen century aristocrat."—*Advt. in Cyprus paper.*

Appeal's a bit limited, isn't it?



## Watching the Ballplatz

ALL my observers report a movement of bullion down to Monaco from the hinterland of Europe. This may mean that the gaming-tables at Monte Carlo have resumed their pre-war activity. On the other hand it may indicate that the State of Monaco is planning to become a Mediterranean power, and is collecting financial resources for the building up of an ambitious programme that we shall hear more of. If the Quai d'Orsay, the Ballplatz and the Kremlin continue to be blind to this move we shall have a power on the flank of the Latin countries which will considerably complicate the already complicated position of the *savoir faire*, and make a formidable buttress of the Savoy Alps. The sale of a large number of draughtsmen with red and black squares has been recently reported in London: this may be merely an ordinary feature of business in the departments of sports and games in the shops; but the colours are worth watching, and may indicate that the influence of *rouge-et-noir*, the national game of Monaco, has penetrated further than Downing Street has supposed.

Meanwhile we hear very little of the Republic of Andorra: this may be because there is little to hear. On the other hand it may mean that secret moves are being prepared in the isolation of this mountain State, which cannot seriously threaten the *status quo*, provided that, and this is the essential provision, no secret understanding has been arrived at between this State and Monaco. If it has the position is sufficiently serious to merit careful watching, for in that case it would mean that the influence of the Mediterranean sea-board was extending into the mountains. Nothing is more far-reaching than sea-power, nothing

more impregnable than mountains; and any *entente* or secret alliance between these two should be watched with the gravest suspicion. There is a certain solidity in mountains that the Mediterranean lacks, and a certain fluency in the Mediterranean that is not to be found in mountains. This is well known to the statesmen in charge of the *haute politique* of both countries, and it should make an ideal combination. Whether such a combination will assist or compromise the peace of Europe depends very much on the line that will be taken by the Kremlin, which in its turn depends on whether the grandiose schemes for the export of sturgeons' roes on a large scale from the Caspian develops as the Kremlin supposes, or whether it proves a flop. In the latter case there are bound to be repercussions that might considerably hamper the pursuit of the line I have indicated, in default of which Monaco and Andorra may constitute nothing less than a *bloc*; and any indefinable, but none the less subtle, influence like a *bloc* might, in the present state of Europe, have far-spreading consequences.

Meanwhile a rising young diplomat was heard to say recently in one of the smarter clubs, to a very well-known general, "We may not be getting so much caviare next year." The remark may have no significance; on the other hand it may mean a great deal

ANON.

### French Without Tears

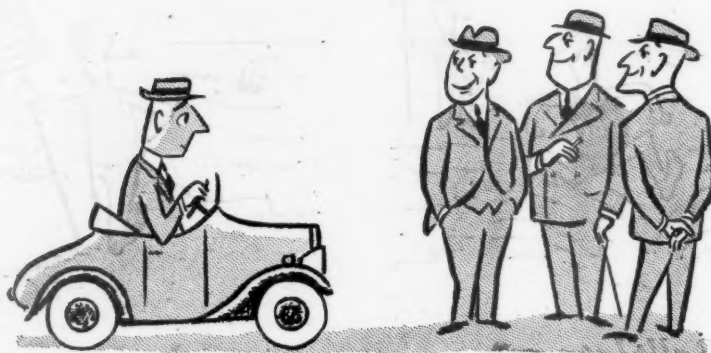
"Complete Set French Linguaphone Records, Metronome, Feather Bed."  
Advt. in Derbyshire paper.

"JACOBAN Oak Bureau, real pre-war..."  
Advt. in Birmingham paper.

Any particular war?



1936



"Here comes Fred in his new Dinky Seven."

1946



"There goes Fred in his old Dinky Seven."

## Normandy, 1946

IV

I LEAVE Deauville eagerly awaiting two notable visitors, *Madame Miniver* and *Arsenic et Vieille Dentelle*. I leave it early in the morning in a Diesel rail-car crammed to capacity, a party of Girl Guides fortunately taking a motherly view of me and somehow manipulating both my rucksack and me inside. They are on their way to camp—very neat, brown, grown-up little girls, entirely charming and in a state of high excitement. Among them in contrast stands a solitary German prisoner in gold spectacles—a sad, pig-eyed piece of

human débris, travelling without escort. They ignore him as absolutely as if he were no more than part of the car. A friendly workman puts a knee at their disposal, an offer which produces momentary silence throughout the shoal, clearly raising delicate problems of protocol; but one of them accepts with grace and she and the old man are soon deep in debate on the surest way to roast a rabbit at a wood fire.

At Lisieux, badly smashed up in the centre, I change into a snorting omnibus train lately out of Paris, sharing a wooden third with a young

farmer from Alençon who makes the astonishing assertion that he has had too much sun and not nearly enough rain. He presumes it is the same in Angleterre, but I am able to shatter this presumption with authority.

Caen is indeed a sorry sight. At first it looks in as bad shape as Cologne or Essen, great stretches of rubbled flatness broken only by stumps and the walls of blasted churches, but gradually the eye discovers an untouched corner. Here is an area of excellent shops, well-stocked and without queues. "*Inscription des bananes*" is scrawled on a fruiterer's window and has a homely ring, especially when a few minutes later it is crossed out. A policeman tells me the first new houses will be ready in the spring and that until then a population still large is living under pressure where it can. Everywhere is the sound of picks and hammers. People look tired but cheerful, and I am rejoiced to note that the *Académie Caennaise de Billard* has escaped. Thus life goes on.

Ce Soir, au Palais des Sports,  
CONFRONTATION AVEC LE BASKET  
RUSSE

Figaro

The destination-boards at the bus-station read like the battle-honours of 21st Army Group—Tilly, Bretteville, Douvres, St. Lo. Round each board clusters a small crowd waiting for their driver to open his door. The principle of the queue being temperamentally anathema to the French, they seem to have resisted it with uncanny success. Their method with buses is at once simple and dramatic. "Any season-ticket holders?" shouts the driver, and these struggle forward. *Mutilés de la guerre*, the aged and the horizontal young are next given their chance, and the last priority of all is for those who are going all the way. An official in a brass hat then fiercely exhorts the privileged sardines already inside to contract themselves mercilessly for the public good, while the rest compete as they can for the cubic foot or so that remains. It seems to me a grand system. I am going all the way.

Here and there along the historic road from Caen to Bayeux there is still the refuse of battle, but the countryside is wonderfully recovered and many of the hamlets are standing. The corn is beginning to be cut, and everybody declares it to be the best for years. I can see a black horse who has



strayed into a field of it up to his shoulders, looking as if he were drowning in gold.

Bayeux is but ten kilometres from the beaches, yet I cannot see a single bullet hole. It is a miracle, says the waitress who brings me lunch in the courtyard, a miracle greatly assisted by the good sense of the curé, who broke for the British lines on his *velo* the moment the last German had fled. It is a lovely place, rich with the tranquil, timeless feeling of a farmers' town. Planned like a village, little courts and shady side streets herring-bone off its one long spine. The houses are high and gracious, their manners uncorrupted by new building, and the shops are full of solid things like twelve-bores and saddles and ploughs.

It is a proper setting for the *Tapisserie de la Reine Mathilde*. (To make a Norman laugh you have only to tell him the theory of the Knowing Beards that poor old Bishop Odo did it, William's half-brother. When he has got his breath again he will assure you cynically that in certain respects it could only have been the work of a woman.) Now nobody in the course of my tedious and grossly expensive education had troubled to inform me that (a) it is not a tapestry at all but a sampler on the bandage principle, done in colours which have stood up bravely, and apparently by an intelligent and somewhat sophisticated child, (b) it is only 20 inches deep but 231 feet long, which is why you are advised to take sandwiches when you go to see it, (c) it was the first comic strip, featuring early Disney animals and pithy subtitles like "Harold Rex Interfectus Est," and, (d) occasional portions of it, where Matilda's agent had evidently called for a little love interest to break the high historical level of the preceding fifty yards or so, are very surprising indeed.

PERDU vendredi 19/7, à 22h.,  
Ch.-Elys., Bog de Bordeaux  
(boxer), répond nom Jiggs, âgé  
17 mois, Tr. b. récomp. Discret.  
assurée. R. Roth, hôtel Ch.-  
Elysées, 3 Rue Balzac, Paris.

Paris-pressé

Royal life on either side of the Channel, stitched with a sure satire, seems to have consisted mainly of eating, drinking and hunting; it was very similar at both courts, though William was about two up on Harold at going to church. And the Battle of Hastings is a magnificent piece of realism, with severed limbs flying in all

directions and odd angry-looking heads strewing the canvas in the manner of a paper-chase. But what is most interesting, what is really staggering, is that someone should have sat down to describe this great amphibious operation, which was to remain the classic landing for nine hundred years until Arromanches put it in the shade, in a castle no more than ten kilometres from Arromanches! And between Senlac, as Matilda drew it, and the exploits of 1944 there are extraordinary similarities. The little ships press forward in convoy, each with great horses in the bows to do the work of the tanks, and when the army is ashore they are piled along the beach looking exactly like Montgomery's invasion craft. I am sorry to report that the behaviour of the hard-pressed English compares ill with the example set by one hastily-mobilized cow, who is mooing defiance at the intruders in a very gallant manner. Soon afterwards, much sooner one gathers than proved possible in the later engagement, the victors sit down ravenously to an ample dinner of fried chicken.

Matilda must have been a wonder girl. She would have liked, I think, the long, high room in which her comic strip is housed, looking out over an ancient walled garden full of scarlet flowers. One could spend days exploring the quirkish crevices of her mind, but to-morrow we must walk down the lane of liberation to Arromanches.

ERIC.

## Fish

F i s h

Such as Bream

Thick fore and aft,

Deep in the draught,

Broad in the beam; solidly

Wallowing, stolidly swallowing,

Always seem comfort-designed;

Lumbersome, cumbersome,

Doubtless they know,

Hence are

Inclined

To be

Pond'rous

And slow.

But

Others

You find

Streamlined

Front and

Behind —

For speed

In reed

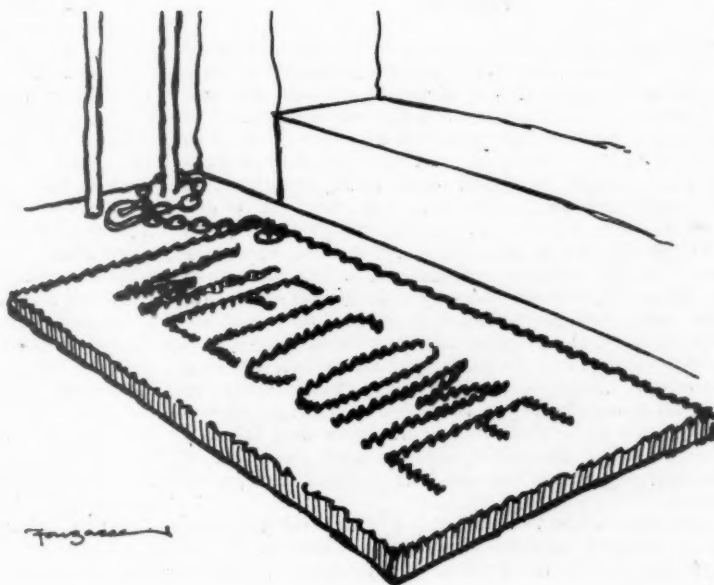
Or weed

Slick

Quick

Like

p i k e.





Hollowood

"Have you heard anything of this rumour about Dalton abolishing football?"

## Names

THE other day I was telling my readers how awkward they feel when they start calling new friends by their Christian names, and it occurs to me that this was only a small aspect of a quite considerable department of life—the general name set-up, which I propose to take as my subject to-day. If, by the way, any self-centred types are hoping I shall tell them what their own Christian name means, and what a nice one it is, they will be disappointed. For any fact so specific they must refer to that bit at the end of the dictionary, somewhere among the weights and measures and difficult to find more than once. They may not see themselves in the list—after all, by the time dictionary-compilers get so far they are probably late for the printers and must think fast—but it is almost as flattering to have your name left out of a representative collection as put in. Anyway, I expect my readers all know already that they are as bright as the sun, or greatly to be respected, or whatever they are, and have never found themselves able to make much use of the fact except perhaps now and then to clinch an illogical argument.

To get back to the task in hand, I shall state first that names in general may be divided into Christian names and surnames, with the former, in this country, coming

first or to the left, and the latter well to the right at the end. In between may come a middle name, which some people do not have and some people have two or even three of, and these middle names may be either Christian names or surnames. Sometimes too a first name is a surname; just as a surname on one person is what does for a Christian name for another. The whole thing is complicated, but boils down to everyone getting a hand-out of a certain number of names when everyone is too young to have any say in it. This may lead to grumbling, but at least we can always blame other people for what we are called; or, if we are pleased with our names, we can take the credit on ourselves, using that subtly obvious technique with which human nature cracks itself up for having thick hair or intellectual ear-flaps—by saying that sort of thing is just luck and leaving the inference to others.

I should explain more fully just what goes into the three names belonging to the average person. Names at the end, or genuine surnames, are inevitable, which means that to the public anyone with a silly surname is entirely to blame for it. Middle surnames, being commemorative and closely tied up with families, are inevitable too, which means that their owners do not find fault with them in detail and that their owners' friends are always a bit impressed, however unwillingly, when they discover what the initial means. Psychologists say that their owners are inclined to be a bit impressed too when they are having to spell it out, and that they are as careful of the welfare of such a name at the hands of others as they are of their real surname. People with middle Christian names, though, are a bit at sea, especially if it is one they like. Every now and then they remember they have it and feel a bit annoyed that they do not make more use of it; but an extra Christian name is not much more practical help than a spare tin-opener, whose sole function is to make us feel well equipped when we are taking stock of ourselves, or in other words adding up why we are so clever. I am not denying of course that some people go through life using their second names as first names, but this process was probably started before they were conscious and all it really amounts to is that they feel about their first names as ordinary people do about their middle ones. They do, however, exact from their friends some small respect for being not quite, though awfully nearly, normal—I suppose public opinion would place them as more normal than the people who are born abroad and come home before they can remember, and less normal than people who don't take sugar in tea. As for the people whose first names are really surnames, all I need say is that it is even more difficult for their friends to start using such a name than to embark on an ordinary Christian name, but that from then on they are no trouble except when we mention them to someone who doesn't know them and run the risk of appearing the sort of people who call others by their surname alone—a prospect which does not appeal to anyone who has taken the trouble to mention a stranger by a Christian name.

To go back to average people, let us consider the average Christian name which comes first in the initials and is used for being called by. Perhaps the most notable thing is the way it looks like its holder. We may know a thin pale face and a fat red one, both with the same name and both having the only one possible; though however willing we are to accept a name as a person we all, I think, have for every Christian name we know an ideal conception which may date from some very early acquaintance or may just be one of those mental images which would not hold together in real life. (I mean, a face seen purely in the mind's eye is so apt to have a feature left out, or to



"It's this 'ere 'aving to read in bed that cheeses me off."

have no allowance made for moving about when it speaks.) All these name-associations have an interesting effect on novel-readers. Even the most conscientious tend to ignore a novelist's early description of, say, some short dark character aged twenty-five called Alexander. They are too busy separating him from the Alexander they know, who is different because he is a real person, and the Alexander they imagine, who is Alexander the Great and consists mainly of a helmet and breastplate and a map of Egypt. I think that if novelists realized this they could keep their descriptions until about the fourth chapter, which is roughly what the readers do anyway.

My readers will be wanting me to say something about nicknames, shortened names and other variations on what people do get to start with. Again, they will probably want to know if I think theirs is a nice one, and again I must disappoint them. All I can really say about nicknames is that most of them have an almost historical origin which the owner is always glad to divulge, and that very few of us can ordain what nicknames we shall be known by, though quite a lot of us are old enough to see them start. Statisticians tell us that the number of people carrying on right through life with the same nickname is either greater or less than the number of people who get a different one for each phase of their careers, and that anyway an awful lot of people have nicknames, or at least abbreviations, and that an awful lot of these people are much prouder of their nicknames than they would have us believe. The technique for carrying on a nickname, psychologists say, is a rather rueful attitude combined with a bit of spade-work in letting each new batch of friends in on it.

Finally, a word about our own names. Apart from the fact that they look wonderful in print, I suppose their chief features are that it is not easy to give them clearly to strangers over the telephone without sounding over-eager or even downright combative, and that one of our proudest moments can occur when we are having something put

down to our account in a shop and someone is watching and listening and taking it all in—anyway, standing near. However, even this is an anxious occasion, because we have to watch the shopman before he gets too far with writing the name wrong, or we shall seem unco-operative, and we have to break the address into phrases which are not so isolated that he starts regrouping them within themselves and finishing before we do, and if our name or address is specially complicated we must apologize without seeming over-chatty in the eyes of the person standing near and by now seeming a bit more impatient than interested. Still, it must all have been pretty exciting to begin with, because look how we feel when we are the person standing near.

### Run-Down

THEY pass, like fast-forgotten dreams—  
The Transit Camps, the Staging Posts,  
The Mobile Shops. Instruction Teams  
And Hygiene Sections join the ghosts.

The good old Native Labour Pool,  
The Provost Company (alas!),  
The well-loved Recognition School,  
The H.Q. Staffs—must these all pass?

I deem it an ungracious thing  
That Rest Camp and Assembly Park  
And Beach Group and Amphibian Wing  
Should cease, unnoticed, in the dark.

Oh, somewhere, surely, salty drops  
Exude from sentimental eyes  
Because some Milling Unit stops  
Or some Dilution Party dies?

Does no one toll a timely knell  
For Third-Line Workshops? Oh, all right!  
Farewell, Field Bakery! Farewell,  
Combined Bombardment Unit (Light)!







"Psst! Squatters in number three."

### H.M.S. —

[The ugliest ship in the Navy has finished her career and will be broken up.—Press.]

**I** SING to-day a ship whose life is ended.  
Not in high fame and general regard,  
Meekly she steals, aloof and unbefriended,  
On her last journey to the knacker's yard.

Ships have been trim, have sailed the waters tightly,  
And been called saucy; her commanding trait  
Was her surpassing Ugliness—if rightly  
Or otherwise it's not for me to say.

Perils of wind and wave and high explosive  
Long though she braved, serene and unconcerned,  
Ugly, a term sarcastic and corrosive,  
Nay, *Ugliest of All*, was all she earned.

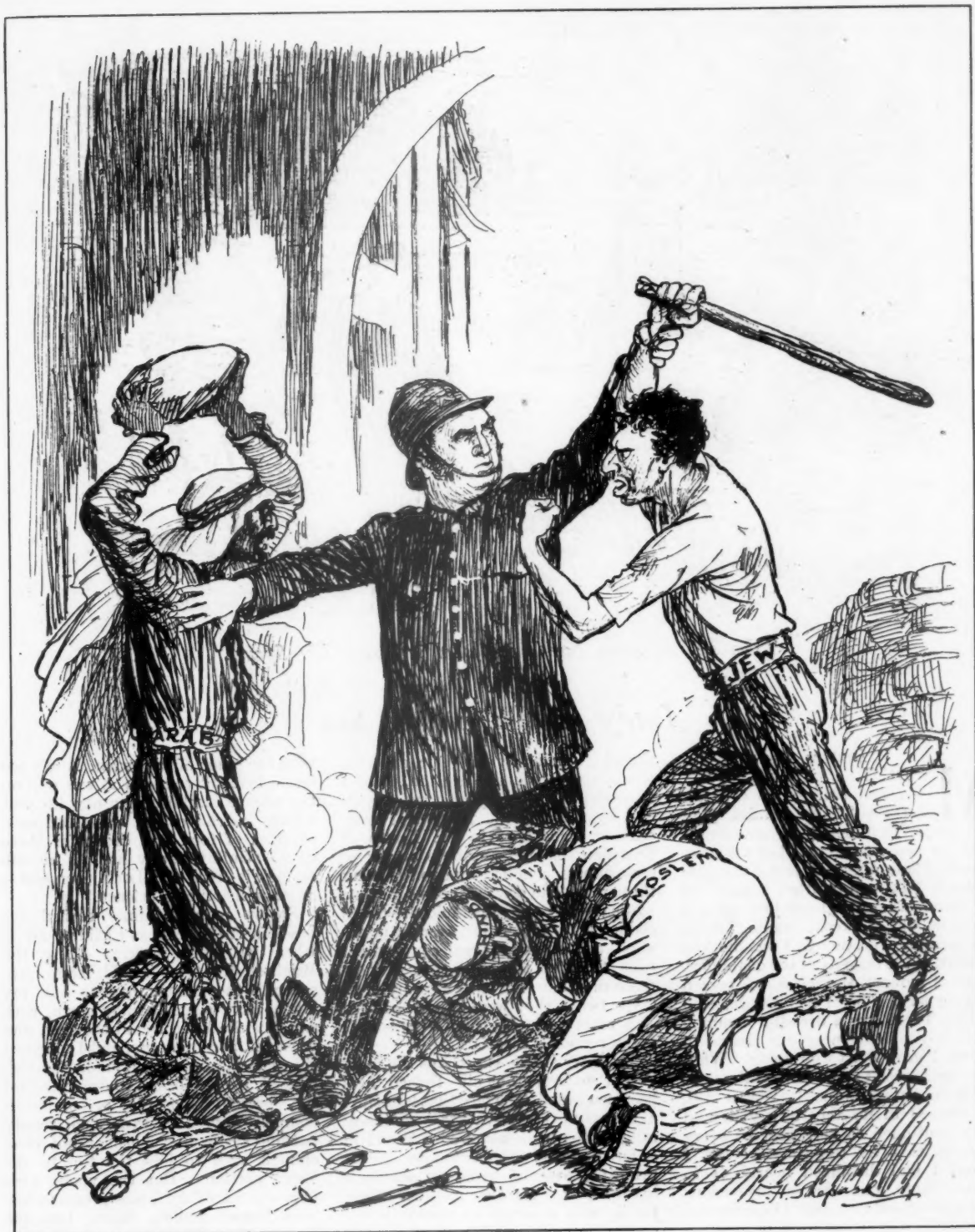
And, ev'n in her last hours, when on the brink of  
That breaking-up to which the best ships come,

That's the one adjective that they can think of;  
Better, far better if they had been dumb.

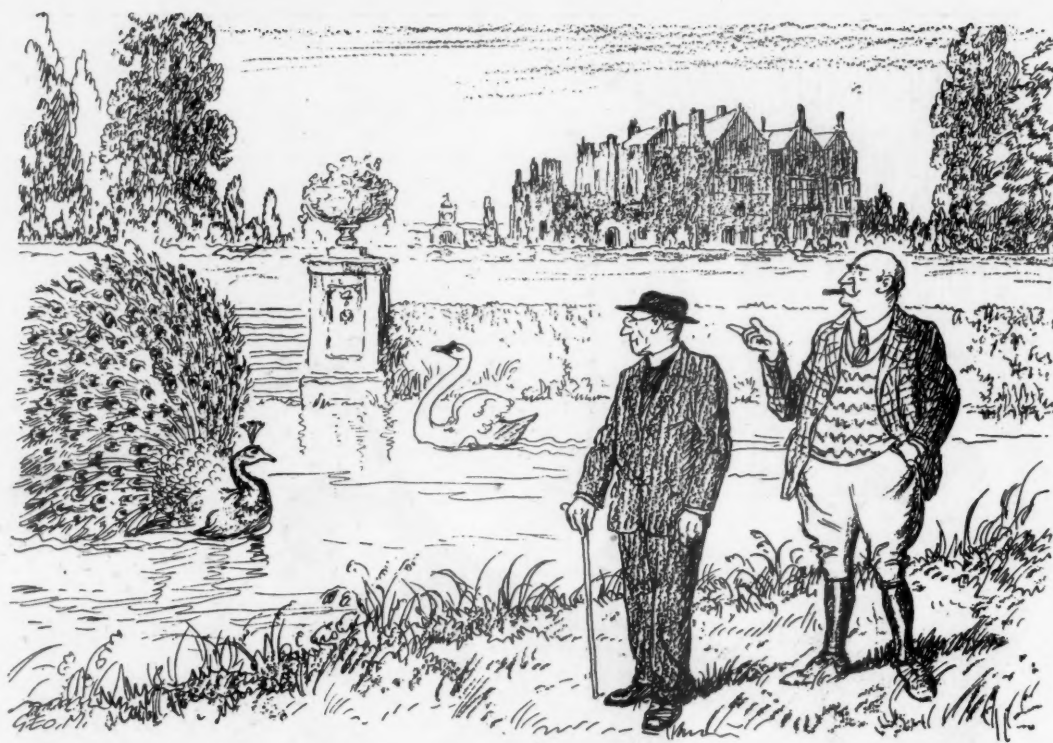
I would uplift a great and epic story,  
Tell her fine deeds and soul-bestirring acts,  
Would lap her in the sunset of her glory,  
But for one thing. I haven't got the facts.

Not that I heed the hampering restriction  
Of dull and narrow truth. I never do.  
But, did I meet with public contradiction,  
She would be shamed, and I look silly too.

I can but offer this unworthy token  
Of sympathy, poor though it be and flat;  
For I myself, in candour be it spoken,  
Am no Oil Painting, if you come to that.  
DUM-DUM.



THE POLICEMAN'S LOT



"You see, the lawns have been flooded ever since last Spring."

### Lady Addle at the Sea

*Bengers, Herts, 1946*

**M**Y DEAR, DEAR READERS,  
—I had planned to call this article "Lady Addle Half Seas Over," as it includes reminiscences both on and by the sea, but for some reason Addle does not think the title suitable. It was written mainly at Brighton, where we have just spent a very delightful week, finding it as charming as ever, though I was shocked to learn of the tragedy of the chain pier. Also of course the class of person staying at the hotel has deteriorated sadly. There was a dreadful common little boy playing near our chairs, to whom I gave 6d. to go away. What was my horror to find him at the next table to ours at lunch! Worse still, he seemed in no way ashamed, and even continued to play near us every day, so that by the time we left I found I had disbursed nearly £1 to him. There was also a mysterious foreigner of sorts—a dago I heard someone call him, so would that be a native of Dagonia? I fear my geography is rather rusty. But more of him anon.

We Coots have ever been sea-dogs of

the old bulldog type. One ancestor lost a leg—a valuable leg too, from a beautiful Spanish chair he was bringing home from the Peninsular war; another took part in the Battle of Trafalgar, though an acute attack of sea-sickness confined him to his bunk throughout the day. All of us got our sea-legs on the magnificent Coots Balder lake, famed for its rich pondweed, and on the disused canal which runs through the park. It is now quite dry, but was once used by dead Coots (when they were alive of course) as a main drain for the estate, so has many romantic associations.

My sister Mipsie is perhaps the most ardent seafarer of us all. Indeed, hers has been called "the face that launched a thousand steam-yachts," so many millionaires have acquired a vessel in order to gratify her passionate, almost primitive love of being at sea in a luxury boat. Another member of my family who deserves a mention is my cousin Dotty Bush, who has what must be a unique collection of sea-water, collected from almost every English resort, all carefully bottled and labelled

with the name of the beach. Addle too had a brilliant cousin who was well on the way to establishing a new life-belt which, instead of air, was filled with supplies of food and drink for three days. Unfortunately he lost his life trying it out on Loch Lomond—another martyr to science.

So we have certainly earned the freedom of the seas, as I said to Addle when we were walking along the Brighton front. I would feign have entered the ocean myself, but my lovely navy serge bathing gown, with smart white braid round the skirt and wrists, is, alas, no more, and I searched the shops in vain for a similar model. Indeed, I was shocked to discover that the present shortage of materials compels women to wear such scanty bathing dresses—sometimes not even enough stuff to join the top to the lower portion. But the young girls bore this hardship, I was proud to see, with brave smiling faces, like the Britons they are.

About the third day of our visit I was standing on the hotel steps, saying how much I would enjoy a drive,



when up came the Dago, Mr. Lopez by name, and begged us to let him take us in his beautiful white car which was standing at the door. Both Addle and I were rather reluctant to go with a foreigner, but Mr. Lopez pressed us so much that it seemed churlish to refuse, so off we went for a lovely drive along the coast, ending up with lunch—which he insisted on paying for—in some very grand hotel. It transpired that he was immensely keen on pigs and also very interested in Women's Institutes, so we found the time passing quite pleasantly, and before we realized it had promised to go for another drive the following day. This time he took us over the downs and was even more kind and sympathetic. He said how deeply he felt that the British aristocracy were taxed out of existence and he was making it his life's work to help them. Accordingly he had founded a company in South America

which ran delightful little kinds of tea-shops—where they also danced, so gay were his countrymen, he said, and in which investment was only open to British peers. He offered to make Addle a director if he would invest £5,000, which would pay a very large dividend, in some mysterious way without income tax. It seemed a wonderful opportunity, but Addle, to my disappointment, appeared rather unenthusiastic and said he would like to see the company's reports. Mr. Lopez said this was impossible, as the secretary was on holiday, but next day he took us both to an agricultural show and bought Addle such a splendid sow as a present, that my husband was much moved in his favour, I could see. He went so far as to say, when we were all having coffee after dinner, that he would consult Mipsie's husband, Sir Augustus Royster (who, my readers will remember, was Governor of the

prison where my poor sister stayed as the guest of the King for a while), when they both arrived for the weekend. They were due at any moment.

Now comes the strange part. Mr. Lopez seemed very interested in Gusto's arrival—I think he said he had met him somewhere—and disappeared to give the waiter some order about drinks. *He never returned!* Half an hour later, when Mipsie and Gusto arrived, we found out from the management that he had packed and gone—without leaving a note or any address. So there was an end of my little dream—new pig-styes for Addle, a fur coat for Margaret, perhaps a tricycle for little Hirsie. It is a great disappointment to me, and I am sure to Addle, though he does not show it. But we must bear it with the same British fortitude that the plucky bathers show in wearing their terrible bathing gowns. M. D.



"*'Join the Crusade' is modern, but 'Join the Palestine Police' is part of the original fabric.*"

## People in Trains

FOR the last ten minutes I have been gazing covertly at the man sitting opposite to me in the 3.42 from London to Bookford Junction, where one changes if so desired for Snampton, Bolford Turgis, Gung and, if one is extremely optimistic, the Ooze Valley Line.

I have not stared at him in a rude sort of way. Part of the time I have just looked at his reflection in the window, which anybody is entitled to do. It is still to that extent a free country. Once his reflection looked back at me with a penetrating glance, but he was just as troubled as I was by this unfortunate contretemps, and I and his reflection both looked quickly away and started to hum softly. I hummed "The Soldiers of the Queen, my lads, the Soldiers of the Queen," and his reflection hummed "When the Poppies Bloom Again," which I think rather dates him.

It was clear that further observation of his reflection in that particular window would invite disaster, so I opened my *Times* and spread it out to its full size and hid myself behind it. He did the same with his *Daily Graphic* and I laughed in a self-congratulatory manner. Regarded as cover for observation purposes the *Daily Graphic* offered poor comparison with the *Times*. Quite a lot of him was still visible, whereas I was completely concealed except for part of my trousers and my feet.

On the other hand, of course, he could see over the top of the *Graphic* while I could see nothing whatever. So I shortened sail, let the *Times* rest on my knees, and fumbled for my nail-file. With this I pierced an item about Trouble in Kurdistan, so that when I again hoisted the mainsail there was a small hole on a level with my eye, through which I could carefully examine the other man. Imagine my surprise to find that he had performed an operation on Mr. Bevin's stomach with some sharp instrument! Our eyes met through the respective peepholes, and we both realized that further subterfuge would be vain.

We lowered our papers, and he was the first to speak.

"Tell me honestly," he said in a kindly tone, "what you find so interesting in my appearance? Do not hesitate to be perfectly frank. I am a philosopher and incapable of taking offence."

I hesitated, and then explained.

"I was thinking," I said, "that

you are the sort of man one only meets in trains. I have a theory that there is a class of men that one meets in trains and nowhere else. They have bulbous eyes, noses of a greasy and wax-like appearance, shaggy brown moustaches, bowler hats, and maroon ties. I hope you will not mind my adding that you are without exception the finest specimen of the type that I have met for years. Now, perhaps, you will reciprocate by explaining your interest in me."

He laughed in a constrained sort of way.

"Oddly enough," he said, "my reasons were precisely the same as your own. I too was thinking that nowhere but in a train would one come upon a human being of your particular type. The curiously pale ginger hair, the tiny moustache trembling above the weak mouth, the revolving chin, the pork-pie hat insecurely resting on two flabby ears. Nothing at all like you is ever seen outside a train. What do you do with yourself when you are not travelling?"

I smiled sadly.

"I am *always* travelling," I said. "The railway company employs me as a decoy on unpopular bits of the line. To-day, for instance, I booked a ticket for Gung, via Snampton, Bolford Turgis and Lumpkin Halt. I demanded it in a very loud voice, hoping that other people in the queue who had not decided on their destination would follow my example. I get commission on all tickets sold to Snampton, Bolford Turgis, Lumpkin Halt and Gung. Which place are you going to?"

The stranger sighed.

"I too am a decoy," he admitted, "for the Ooze Valley Line. The toughest and loneliest assignment of all."

## Letter from Denmark

To the President of the Board of Education.

SIR,—I herewith beg to propose that half of the children at school—say the girls—should learn to read the letters upside down.

In reality, it would not be more difficult than to learn reading them when turning "right." It is only a matter of habit.

The reform would reduce the consumption of school books at about 50 per cent., and thus mean a considerable saving of paper, cardboard, thread, linen, printer's ink, etc., as the

boys and the girls could sit two by two opposite each other and read in the same book.

The method would also prevent quarrel in the homes between man and wife as to who shall have the paper first. They simply place it between them on the table, reading each from his side.

Respectfully yours,

AAGE V. H.—.

## American Commentary

II

GOOD evening. I feel fairly certain that most of you this week will have heard, maybe for the first time, of what are called over here the "deflate-or-bust" proposals of Mr. George R. Jeeperson, Junior. If you have not heard of Mr. Jeeperson before, I would just remark in passing that this is one fair-sized advantage you have had over most of our officials down in Washington, who have been hearing of him all they want to, and let me warn you against exaggerating this amount. I should explain that Mr. Jeeperson, who is a one-time pretzel-packer from the pretzel-farming country around Creosote, Bravado, recently hit the front page with a straight statement charging the tax-relief commission with an all-round anti-pretzel bias; and I will not pretend that this pronouncement was received by Secretary Fishbread C. Pepperall, of our Department of Commerce, with any great excess of old-world courtesy. Indeed you may at this moment yourselves feel tempted to write George R. Jeeperson down as just another small-time sorehead from way back. It should therefore be added for the record that the Jeeperson statement has already blocked ratification of the San Fiasco Valley project, and looks right now as if it will torpedo tax-relief and skyrocket buckwheat to another all-time high. What this might mean in terms of congressional opposition to a two-cents raise in take-home wages will be apparent when I remind you that the strength of anti-Raw Deal feeling in our Middle South is always strictly proportionate to the import-export duty on farm produce divided by the number of senators due up for renomination in the fall, and the President will almost certainly be keeping this in mind. So, too, will Senator Brickenbacker, of Hideho,



*"Thank goodness there's only another two days left of the holidays."*

who as I speak to you has just told pressmen that only one man could have got the pretzel industry the way it is, and that if anybody thinks he means the President they are dead right. Now it is worth remembering that the President is no longer likely to back down on pretzels in order to get the small farmer behind the Beanstalk Bill in the event of a head-on show-down between the run-of-the-mill expansionists and the dyed-in-the-wool deflationists, as he has in fact been there since the ceiling came off livestock in mid-June; though I must in fairness add that it is now an odds-on bet that should the Supreme Court hand down the kind of decision on pretzels that they handed down on cornflakes, the pretzel industry will hand it them right back. What makes this of more than ordinary significance right now is that Senator Bulkhead, of North Gasolina, is currently

campaigning good and hard to take cornflakes out of politics, keep cornflakes out of politics, and set up a fact-finding commission to investigate how cornflakes got into politics in the first place. Rightly or wrongly, it is now being freely forecast that if the inflationary spiral overtakes the export curve with the President still trying to push the Beanstalk Bill through the House of Representatives the opposition will have a chance to pigeon-hole pretzels, bring in livestock by the side door, and push George R. Jeeperson under the isolationist platform. In this they could of course count on the full support of Senator Brickenbacker, who last year got control of the Democratic machine in Pancake City and backed it into the Republican convention at Grampus Falls. One recent survey, in fact, showed some twenty-five per cent. as voting that pretzels are political dynamite, thirty

per cent. that Congress would within days have come down on the side of cornflakes, and forty-five per cent. that George R. Jeeperson would have split the opposition clear up the middle, gone over the heads of both Houses of Congress and come down on the far side of the San Fiasco Valley. Meanwhile the President has probably swung heavy industry into line with his emergency statement that there are cornflakes in both party machines, that the inflationary spiral is headed south and may ruin this year's fruit crop, and that whoever is behind the Bulkhead proposal has flattened out the export curve, and from where he sits it looks like Senator Brickenbacker; from which it is a safe assumption that a good many developments in the all-over situation will have kept right on developing between now and next week's American Commentary. Good night.



## At the Play

"BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD"  
(ST. JAMES'S)

"FOOLS RUSH IN" (FORTUNE)

"THE EAGLE HAS TWO HEADS"  
(LYRIC, HAMMERSMITH)

MR. FREDERICK LONSDALE's people at the St. James's spear each other accurately across a sitting-room in a Scottish country house. Mr. KENNETH HORNE's people at the Fortune dart in and out of a lounge-hall in Kent. M. COCTEAU's people at Hammersmith agonize and declaim in a Ruritanian castle on a thunderous midnight or in the glare of noon. These settings are familiar enough on the stage (M. COCTEAU's less than the others). Have the authors, English and French, managed to lift their plays from the ruck?

On the whole they have, though not very far. I feel that, a few years from now, our shorthand for the LONSDALE comedy will be "the one with the fight." The first of the two acts has a very pretty fight indeed. Mr. MICHAEL GOUGH, as quite the nastiest young man the stage has seen lately (his words are like "a cloud of winged snakes"), and Mr. HUGH McDERMOTT as an American officer, hurtle at each other with enthusiasm in an all-in, all-out grapple on the sitting-room carpet. Mr. McDERMOTT wins; unhappily (or happily—it depends how you feel) Mr. GOUGH's neck is broken. And Mr. J. H. ROBERTS, who represents "the Yard"—summoned, surprisingly, to Scotland—observes later on: "What a fascinating murder! It has that rare thing in murders—style." Mr. ROBERTS is wrong about the body (we know the facts and he does not) but we can say at least that his inquiry has that rare thing in detection—style.

When the members of the family are sitting around on arm-chairs and sofas, launching quips at each other, with Mr. A. E. MATTHEWS cherubically acid in the centre, we are inclined to forget the body altogether. (Few men can have been mourned less.) The LONSDALE dialogue crackles as ever with near-epigrams—oddly old-

fashioned, some of them—the quality of invective is not strained, and there is good acting and sharp-shooting by all concerned: honourable mention for Miss MARY JERROLD and Mr. H. G. STOKER, Miss YVONNE OWEN and Mr. ROBERT DOUGLAS. The play stands comfortably among the "gilded gear" of its forerunners—well below *The High Road* but well above *Another Love-Story*—and this season's Lonsdale Belts must go to Mr. MATTHEWS and to Mr. GOUGH, whose young blackmailer is peculiarly venomous. "Indeed, there is no goodness in the worm."

Mr. HORNE has two acts to fill before he can show us Miss JOHNS relenting, and he manages to fill them with a cheerful flash-and-splutter. The business is conducted with the proper spirit by Miss GLYNIS JOHNS in her vein of husky innocence, Miss JOYCE BARBOUR as a kind of maternal feather-whisk, Miss JESSICA SPENCER as a swooping actress-bridesmaid, and Mr. BERNARD LEE as a father and confessor. A snug evening, then, though how anyone can occupy that lounge-hall for twenty minutes without catching a roaring cold is the author's secret.



### TWO TO ONE ON THE DETECTIVE

Mary . . . . .	MISS YVONNE OWEN
Emily . . . . .	MISS MARY JERROLD
Charles . . . . .	MR. A. E. MATTHEWS
Inspector Rayle . . . . .	MR. J. H. ROBERTS
Richard . . . . .	MR. ROBERT DOUGLAS

Mr. HORNE's lounge-hall at the Fortune is less fashionable. His people prefer the hearty wise-crack to the considered epigram. Instead of an evening of burnished body-work we have the woes of an unquiet wedding. For some reason Miss GLYNIS JOHNS (bride) chooses her wedding morning to brood over the fearful finality of the marriage vow: in consequence she sits, musing and obstinate, among the toast-racks while her mother, her divorced father, her potential step-father, her bridesmaid, her ex-nannie, and even the bridegroom whirl anxiously about her, and the marriage-bells continue their "gush of euphony."

Last, the Ruritanian revels at Hammersmith—in a play adapted by Mr. RONALD DUNCAN from M. JEAN COCTEAU's *Azrael*, not yet seen in Paris. This is a thundering Hugoesque melodrama. It begins in a storm (credit to Mr. MURRAY MACDONALD), and when the thunder has stilled overhead another storm rumbles on in the dialogue. There is possibly more in M. COCTEAU's original than Mr. DUNCAN has discovered; yet thanks to a startling performance by Miss EILEEN HERLIE as a mourning queen (whose heart, so to speak, "is volcanic as the lavas that restlessly roll") the first and most persuasive act has an uncommon ring. Although after this the piece crumples dangerously, it is never dull. We are grateful for a closing scene in which Mr. JAMES DONALD—a revolutionary who came to kill but remained to love—lies poisoned at the foot of a staircase, while Miss HERLIE, stabbed in the back, topples down to join him and a band off-stage plays the national anthem (Rule Brittenia?).

Even if the affair becomes embarrassing in its pomp, there is at first a true romantic force. It is not a major melodrama, but it is at least Ruritanian with a difference, and we have always Miss HERLIE to sweep through it in triumph. Mr. DONALD is a good listener and, when his own time comes, a ready talker. Others have little to do; Miss JILL ESMOND, Mr. JAMES McKECHNIE, and Mr. NOEL WILLMAN are respectively embittered, loyal, and suave. J. C. T.



"... then it goes on: 'N.B.—If the above paragraph does not apply to you, don't read it.'"

### At the Ballet

#### "THE MASQUE OF COMUS" (COLISEUM)

INTERNATIONAL Ballet has staged *The Masque of Comus* at the Coliseum, with choreographic embellishments by MONA INGLESBY and décor and costumes by DORIS ZINKEISEN. Milton is of course a disconcerting partner for the ballet, for though he is dead he obstinately refuses to lie down. You fill your stage with deities in ballet-dresses of pale-blue and white; you set in their midst Cupid, Psyche, Venus, Adonis, Iris and the Three Graces all in the prettiest Grecian draperies with golden sandals, wings, rainbow scarves and what-not; you seat Jove in purple and white on a bank of clouds. You start them all a-tripping on the light fantastic toe (all except Jove, who is above such things)—and then along comes Milton, looking chubby and cherubic in the shape of LESLIE FRENCH (the *Attendant Spirit*) and says:

*Before the starry threshold of Jove's court  
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes  
Of bright aerial spirits live inspired  
In regions mild of calm and serene air...*

Instantly your gods and goddesses turn into cabaret-girls, and cloud-enthroned Jove becomes a box of bonbons sitting on top of a pile of méringues. It really isn't fair.

The truth is that where Milton is there is no room for anybody else. ROBERT HELPMANN realized this when he produced his *Comus* ballet and resisted what must have been a sore temptation to display his talent for speaking verse by giving two speeches only from Milton's text.

The acting cast at the Coliseum acquit themselves fairly well, but none of them except LESLIE FRENCH is able to think in long enough periods. The broad splendid sweep of Milton's verse leaves them short of breath and his stately measures sound broken and jerky. CONSTANCE SHACKLOCK has a beautiful contralto voice and sings the

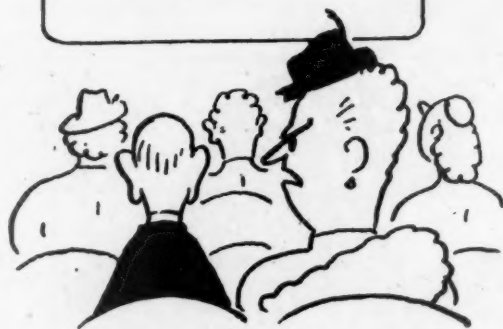
song of *Sabrina* well. *Sabrina* is the water-nymph who releases the *Lady* from the evil spell laid on her by *Comus* (ANTONY EUSTREL), the son of *Circe*, who turns men into sensual monsters.

MONA INGLESBY's choreography is not very inspiring. The country dances in the last scene are her most successful contribution to the production—though why was it thought necessary to introduce a vulgar musical-comedy chorus with spangles and ostrich-feathers into a Restoration scene? One wonders too why ERNEST IRVINE decked his agreeable HANDEL selections in modern orchestration.

D. C. B.

### Something Positive

**B**EFORE you deplore the negative nature of war, meet Smith; he's far more of a bore than ever before.



Johnson

"I thought you said it had a happy ending!"

### Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

#### Thomas Burke

Thomas Burke, who died last year in his late fifties, was best known to the public as the author of *Limehouse Nights*, a collection of short stories about the Chinese in the docks quarter of London. In this delightful autobiography (*Son of London*: HERBERT JENKINS, 12/6) THOMAS BURKE confesses that when he wrote *Limehouse Nights* he had no knowledge of the Chinese people and no acquaintance with Limehouse beyond what he had absorbed in casual wanderings through that district. "I had thus," he says, "been able to write those stories with the peculiar assurance a man has who knows nothing of what he is writing or talking about." His life, he continues, has been "a quiet, commonplace literary man's life," and he has disappointed admirers of his short stories, when they have met him, by his unlikeliness to the big husky fellow accustomed to knocking about in the tough corners of the world whom they had imagined him to be. It would perhaps be incorrect to say that the author has entirely disused his faculty for romanticizing reality in this story of his own life, for his invocation of the "immortal hours" he and his girl-friend Freda spent as children in a South London suburb is touched with a somewhat fairy-tale charm. But the book becomes more real as it advances, and will recall very vividly to older readers and recreate for younger the literary and journalistic world of London thirty to forty years ago.

H. K.

#### The Irish "Kitchen"

The more gadget-ridden grows the kitchen, the worse becomes the food; and one's only quarrel with *Maura Lavery's Cookery Book* (LONGMANS, 8/6) is that the author has not made enough of the primitive Irish practices whose recipes, scattered through *Never No More*, allured so many of her first readers. Writing here, in the jolly, hoydenish, autobiographical vein that so well becomes her, she does give you a picture of the kitchen she was born in and of the pot oven and griddle of its open hearth. But we could have done with more details of these ancestral ways; and with illustrations we could follow instead of modernist decorations. Perhaps Miss LAVERTY will oblige in future? For even before we are all back in our caves, such knowledge will be useful—if the food has not given out first. Meanwhile, here is cookery learnt not in colleges but in seven kitchens, one of them Spanish. It varies from the coarse to the florid, as peasant cooking is apt to do. It is immensely entertaining, and so good that, if still practised in Ireland, it would attract yet more tourists to Dun Laoghaire and Rosslare. But Miss LAVERTY warns them they will find no vegetables, apart from potatoes and cabbage.

H. P. E.

#### Maxim Gorki

*Literature and Life* (HUTCHINSON: INTERNATIONAL AUTHORS, 12/6) contains a selection from the critical writings of Maxim Gorki between 1896 and 1935. Tolstoy and Lenin were the two chief influences in the life of Gorki, who in his earlier years obeyed his impulse to see and feel things as an individual, but later yielded to the desire to submerge himself in a mass movement, with its narcotizing effect on feeling and its paralysing effect on thought. His account of Tolstoy is wonderful in its naturalness, sincerity and penetration. He pictures the great old man in his many contradictions, wise, cunning, arrogant and tender; and running round him, like "cautious little dogs," the Tolstoyans, whining in accompaniment to the master's words, "and squinting at each other all the time to see who had whined the best." Chekhov, whom he loved, he also pictures most vividly, with mingled subtlety and simplicity. "All his life," he says, "Chekhov lived on his own mental and spiritual resources; he was always true to himself, never lost his inner freedom." Gorki wrote this in 1905. How little of his own inner freedom he himself retained appears in his pronouncements after he had become the chief spokesman of Soviet culture. The Soviet Union, he said in 1934, had "purged the world of the rust and mould of pessimism"; and immeasurably more significant themes than love and death and similar bourgeois subjects were now presenting themselves to the "150,000,000 talented people who are successfully building a new life for themselves."

H. K.

#### Epic Siberia

In the Abakan valley of South-eastern Siberia there were three nomad tribes. Their demi-gods lived in layer upon layer of the heavens above, and their devils in layer upon layer of the black earth below; and the tribal poet—usually a magician—could display these layers to his public with the ease of a cook dismembering an onion. Half a century before the Soviet fitted out the tribes with kommissars and tractors, the poems were collected; and a selection of them has been translated by Mr. NORMAN COHN into a sort of Old Testament prose-poetry which conveys, Mr. ARTHUR WALEY says, the barbarous splendour



of the original. The splendour is visual, not oral. *Gold Khan* (SECKER AND WARBURG, 12/6) is a panorama of the steppes, complete with tents, warriors and stallions. In the chief *yurta* there is a king with a wife whom he can hold by the plaits while he flogs her, and a son who is always being kidnapped by hostile powers who can change their shape at will. All six poems are of the highest ethnological significance and all have great moments; but by far the most remarkable is "Dappled Hawk," in which a warrior summons his animal retainers to help him ward off the end of the world.

H. P. E.

### Documentary

*Grierson on Documentary* (COLLINS, 16/-) is much more than the title would suggest; at least, it treats the subject far more widely than the inexpert reader, without reflection, would even think possible. It is a collection of Mr. John Grierson's writing about films, and as Grierson is the great documentary man (he was the first to use the word, and to define it as "the creative treatment of actuality") the idea of the importance of documentary naturally runs through the book, explicit and implicit, holding it together; but this is not to say that the studio film, the non-realistic commercial fairy-tale, receives no attention. On the contrary, all the first part of the book is candidly devoted to reviews of famous smasheroos of this type, and very entertaining it is indeed. The editor, Mr. FORSYTH HARDY, has arranged these admirable fireworks in a section called "Background to Documentary"; after this come sections dealing more literally with the documentary movement, its history, its achievement, its development in war-time, its educational significance and its future. In the whole book the superficial attractions for the ordinary reader are the fresh, lively, stimulating literary style and the ninety-two illustrations (ranging from Harpo Marx in *Animal Crackers* to the intent riveters in *Shipyards*); its less obvious and more important merit is that it collects a wealth of information, criticism and penetrating argument from the writings of a man whose unique authority makes all three immensely valuable.

R. M.

### The Return of the Native

The feelings of the exiles who landed in Normandy in 1944 are hard for us to imagine. The ecstasy of touching French earth again is something only a Frenchman can describe; and in *Over To France* (OXFORD, 7/6) M. PIERRE MAILLAUD gives a moving account of how he went ashore in the Cotentin with the Leclerc armoured division and followed its gallant progress all the way to Alsace. His return had for him a special interest, for during his four years in this country he had been "Pierre Bourdan," one of the three Frenchmen regularly broadcasting information and encouragement across the Channel. He was quick to put the efficiency and courage of the Resistance Movement to the test, being captured by the Germans soon after landing and imprisoned in a crammed railway truck before making his escape in Anjou. Everyone helped. Station-masters baffled infuriated Germans with devilish ingenuity, holding up traffic while the men of the Resistance were warned further down the line and hissing bulletins to the prisoners under the noses of their guards, while a ganger openly smuggled vital tools in a bottle of dirty water. To MAILLAUD the brave demeanour of his countrymen came as a splendid vindication, and when later he crossed the Rhine he found a very different spirit of fawning and sheep-like co-operation. The high-point of his story is the liberation of his beloved Paris, a dreamlike day made up of kisses and snipers' bullets and extraordinary street-corner battles interrupted by cries from pavement tables of

"What's yours, gentlemen?" This is a charming and exciting book, to be read with pleasure not only for its graphic account of memorable events but also for the generosity of its author's tribute to his British hosts.

R. O. D. K.

### Out of the Past

Mr. RAFAEL SABATINI has a light hand with villains, varlets, gallants and gay ladies, as he has proved once again in *Turbulent Tales* (HUTCHINSON, 9/6), a collection of sixteen stories with just enough excitement to make for swift turning of the pages and just enough charity to make us know, if we are interrupted, that the brave and the beautiful will be saved at the end. This is just as it should be, but it would not be quite enough if Mr. SABATINI did not add a spice of wit and twist his stories very prettily. One of the best, "The Scapulary," tells of a Huguenot gentleman who, on the eve of a massacre, half strangles a friar outside his wife's apartment, and then discovers he is not a friar at all and is calling, not in hate, but in love. The scene between the three of them would make a most excellent short play. There is a good deal of humour in the story describing a remedy that was sent to Judge Jeffreys, and in the "Alchemical Egg" that tells of the firing of the Philosopher's Stone. Some of the others are purely romantic and deal with last-minute reprieves, valiant highwaymen and the like. "The Kneeling Cupid," which is about an episode in the life of young Michelangelo, provides a pretty commentary on the methods of "arty" artists and the gullible, and is as true to-day as ever. There is nothing very brilliant in the book, but there is nothing pretentious either, and it makes excellent holiday reading.

B. E. B.



"Of course, things will be a lot easier once they've harnessed atomic energy for commercial purposes."

## Horse in the Mess

THE day the second-in-command brought his horse into the ante-room of the mess the colonel was away visiting a squadron on detachment, and arrived back late for lunch. Consequently there was no one who could tactfully tell the second-in-command to take his horse out, and it stayed in the mess unchallenged for nearly half an hour. The novelty of the situation was too much for most people, who, having no precedent to fall back on, were content to wait until someone else took some kind of action.

Meanwhile the second-in-command, quite unembarrassed, patted his horse on the neck from time to time and said "Wozzums a good horse, den, eh?" and a sycophantic subaltern tried to make it drink a glass of gin.

The entrance to the mess is up four stone steps and through a swing door, but the second-in-command's horse is very well trained (it formerly belonged to a German cavalry regiment, and represents a small drop in the reparations ocean) and allowed him to lead it in without so much as a whinny. Once in position between the piano and the table where the newspapers are kept, it remained admirably still, confining any demonstration it might have felt tempted to make to an occasional lifting of one hoof and putting it down again in the same place. It didn't even shy at the officer who offered it a glass of German gin, which would have been excusable both on account of the officer and the liquid. The second-in-command scratched it behind the ear and said politely, "Fürstin's not thirsty, wozzums, Fürstin, eh, you dreary old beast?"

Ultimately the C.O. came back, in an atomic temper at being late for his lunch, and the horse was removed. The colonel took one look at it, saw the second-in-command stroking its rump, and said in as matter-of-fact a tone as if there were horses in the mess every day, "Take that beast out of here, Gerald, will you?" And the second-in-command said "Right-ho, colonel," and led Fürstin out of the ante-room and across the hall and down the four stone steps, where his servant took over and returned the horse to the stables.

The only remark the colonel made to the second-in-command about the matter at lunch was: "Fürstin's going a bit lame in the off fore, isn't she?"

"Did you think so?" said the second-in-command, alarmed.

"It was just the way she went out of the door," said the colonel.

After that they talked about canteen supplies.

Later, in the privacy of his office, he asked the second-in-command for an explanation, describing his conduct as "very odd." "Can't see any good reason for bringing a horse into the mess," he confessed.

The second-in-command settled himself comfortably, this being the moment for which he had planned the whole episode, and began, "Well, colonel, it's the dogs."

"But it doesn't do the dogs any good."

"No, I know it doesn't. I hoped it would do them some harm. You see," he went on, "ever since we settled in here, officers have been collecting dogs from the Germans, all kinds of dogs."



"Yorkshire-with or Crêpe-Suzette after?"

"Nothing wrong in that," said the colonel. "Got one myself."

"And they all," continued the second-in-command, "bring them into the mess and feed them on our rations and drool over them, and let them get under your feet." He went on to particularize several more of the officers' dogs' vices.

"Yes," said the colonel, "but I don't see what that has to do with bringing a horse into the mess."

"It's just that you have to draw a line somewhere," said the second-in-command, "and as it hasn't been drawn at some of the filthy great brutes that tumble about the place these days, I didn't see why it should be drawn at Fürstin. After all, she behaved very well; she was quite clean, and she didn't put her hoofs on anyone's lap, or knock any glasses off the table with her tail, or go and beg for hay in the dining-room. In fact she was perfectly well-behaved and quiet."

"I quite agree," said the colonel; "but surely, Gerald, you must see that you can't bring a horse into the mess like that."

"Well of course if you don't want me to, colonel," the second-in-command conceded.

After he had gone the colonel sent for the adjutant.

"I want you to write a letter to Brigade for me to sign," he told him, "and recommend Gerald for a second-grade staff job. I think he's wasted at regimental duty, and it's not fair on him to keep him here when he could be doing a much better job at Rhine Army."

"I will if you say so, colonel," said the adjutant, "but there's a letter in your in-tray posting him to the Far East."

The C.O. fluttered the contents of his in-tray till he found the letter and read it intently. It had been initialled as having been seen by the second-in-command.

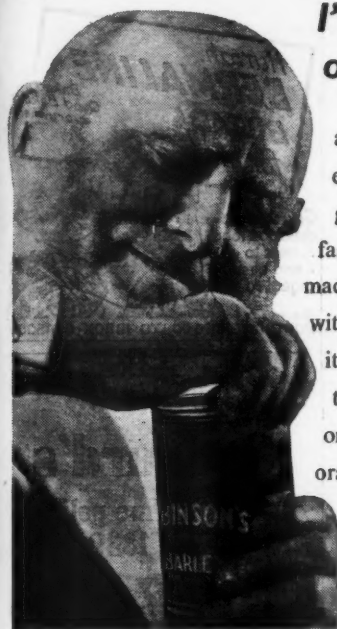
"Well, we'll leave it," he decided at length. "And I wish to heaven," he added as the adjutant went out, "you wouldn't always bring that filthy dog of yours in here every time you come in."

"Sorry, colonel," said the adjutant, surprised and hurt.

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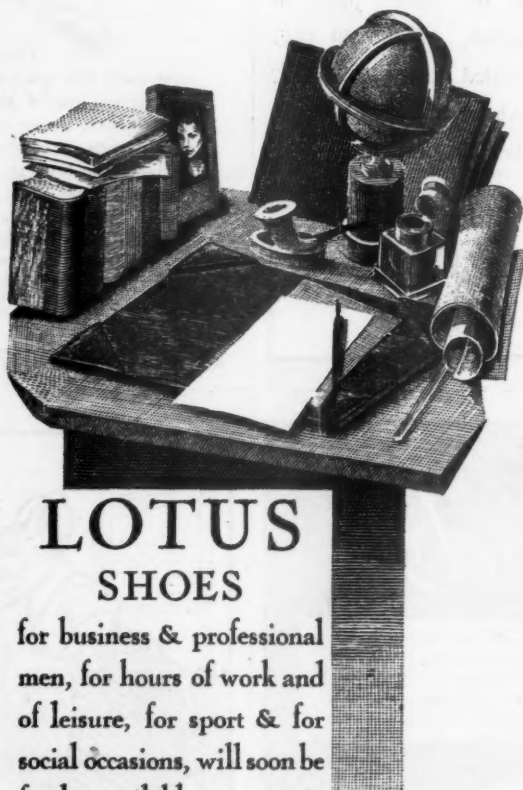
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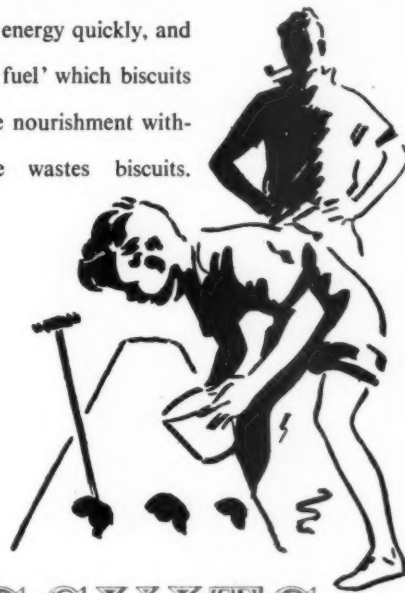
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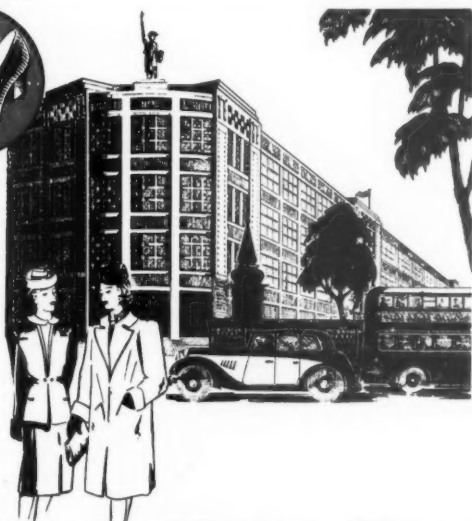
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